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Baker-Polito Administration Announces Support for edX MicroMasters Programs

BOSTON – Today the Baker-Polito Administration and public higher education leaders announced support for the efforts of [edX](#), a Massachusetts-based nonprofit online learning destination founded by Harvard and MIT, which recently launched 19 [MicroMasters](#) programs to help students advance their careers and offer a path to an accelerated Master's program. These courses are designed to be an easily accessible, faster way to build targeted professional skills and pathways to credits. The Baker-Polito Administration plans to work with the Department of Higher Education and University of Massachusetts to develop recommendations, such as a pilot program within the administration, to support this effort and bolster skill-building and more affordable education choices.

"Lieutenant Governor Polito and I are excited about the opportunity edX's MicroMasters program presents for investing in one of the Commonwealth's strongest assets – our talented workforce," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "This partnership will allow our great public and private colleges and universities to employ the latest technology to offer students more choices, curb the cost of higher-education, and ultimately strengthen our position as a national leader in online education."

Governor Baker is directing Secretary of Education Jim Peyser and Secretary of Administration and Finance Kristen Lepore to coordinate with the Department of Higher Education, the University of Massachusetts, and the Commonwealth's Human Resources Division to develop recommendations for the following areas:

1. Piloting structured professional development opportunities in 2-3 state agencies through edX MicroMasters programs, to build team skills and provide qualified staff with a head start on a full Master's degree;
2. Encouraging and supporting individual state employees to build their professional skills and credentials through job-relevant MicroMasters programs;
3. Evaluating the feasibility of the Commonwealth's public universities accepting MicroMasters credentials as credit for prior learning in applicable graduate programs;
4. Co-sponsoring with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, the University of Massachusetts, and edX, a working group or forum, involving leaders from higher education, major employers, and education entrepreneurs to consider how Massachusetts can accelerate the development and adoption of stackable "Micro-credentials," at both graduate and undergraduate levels, to address critical skill shortages in the workforce and to improve the accessibility and affordability of post-secondary credentials.

"I am thrilled to work with higher education leaders from both the public and private sectors to explore ways we can offer more flexible and affordable choices for students, as well as build relevant career competencies to ensure a more effective workforce," **said Education Secretary Jim Peyser**. "Massachusetts is already a leader in education and educational technology, and these programs will be one more tool to prepare students and employees for the 21st century workplace."

"This innovative program will allow us to provide new learning opportunities to the commonwealth's workforce," **said Secretary of Administration and Finance Kristen Lepore**. "We look forward to piloting some of edX's new offerings to help build the professional skills of our state employees while offering a valuable credential that could lead to a graduate degree."

"Massachusetts is a world leader in both higher education and in technology-based innovation, and we are excited to collaborate with the new offerings created by edX," **said Board of Higher Education Chairman Chris Gabrieli**. "We look forward to working with stakeholders across the Commonwealth including both private and public higher education as well as employers and residents to harness the most powerful ways to help all of our citizens gain the skills they need and want."

“This is an innovative approach to education, and we are proud to have it come from within Massachusetts” **said Carlos E. Santiago, Commissioner of Higher Education.**

“We are always looking for new and effective ways to prepare students for high-skilled opportunities in Massachusetts, and I look forward to working with higher education leaders to discuss how we can use these new programs to our full advantage and the benefit of students and the academic community across the Commonwealth.”

“As a leading provider of online education, UMass understands how dynamic this emerging market is,” **said UMass President Marty Meehan.** “We look forward to exploring opportunities for collaboration with edX in order to increase the rate of innovation in this field and to strengthen Massachusetts’ position as a global leader in higher education.”

“As a global edtech company founded and based in Massachusetts, we are passionate about education innovation, and honored to be working with the Commonwealth to help Massachusetts residents improve their lives and advance their careers,” **said Anant Agarwal, edX CEO and MIT Professor.** “This new collaboration will help further our mission to offer flexible and affordable education to learners, employees, and employers in Massachusetts and beyond.”

About EdX

EdX is a nonprofit, open-source learning destination offering online courses from more than 100 member institutions, composed of both leading global universities and colleges, and a diverse group of prominent organizations from around the world. Founded by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and based in Cambridge, MA, USA, edX is focused on transforming online and classroom learning through groundbreaking methodologies, game-like educational experiences and cutting-edge research on an open-source platform.

About MicroMasters

MicroMasters is a series of courses designed to launch or advance careers and offer a path to an accelerated Master’s program. Faster, flexible and free to try, MicroMasters provides access to advanced education for everyone, everywhere. Created by prestigious universities and offered in the most in-demand fields, MicroMasters programs are recognized by companies like Walmart, GE and IBM for real job relevancy and provide deeper learning in a specific career area. MicroMasters are offered on edX.org, the nonprofit online learning destination founded by Harvard and MIT. More information can be found at www.edx.org/micromasters.

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